

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 COME-00

EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 TRSE-00 RSR-01 /098 W
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R 260715 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 603

INFO CNO WASHDC

USNAVCOMSTA HAROLD E HOLT

DOD WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 1717

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, MARR, PFOR, AS, US

SUBJ: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOR SITUATION AT

NORTHWEST CAPE STATION

REF: CANBERRA 1673

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS AND,
ULTIMATELY, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, CALLED EMBASSY
THROUGHOUT PAST WEEKEND IN MOUNTING CONCERN ABOUT SUBJECT
DISPUTE IN WHICH LABOR LEADERS HAD THREATENED WALKOUT
OF ALL AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYEES AT BASE. AFTER CONSULTATION
STATION COMMANDER, CAPTAIN CUNNINGHAM, WITHDREW
MEMORANDUM REGARDING VOLUNTARY TAKING OF LEAVE WITHOUT
PAY BY AUSTRALIAN WORKERS AT STATION. THIS WAS CARRIED
ON NATIONAL NEWS BROADCASTS. EIGHT- MEMBER TLC DELE-
GATION FROM PERTH HEADED BY SECRETARY JAMES COLEMAN
ARRIVED AT STATION MARCH 25 AND PLAN TO STAY TO MARCH 27,
DURING WHICH TALKS ON LABOR RELATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE
WITH CAPT. CUNNINGHAM. END SUMMARY.

2. DCM WAS CALLED BY SEVERAL AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS
DURING 24- HOUR PERIOD BEGINNING EVENING MARCH 23.
FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKENEY OF DEPARTMENT OF
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD TWO POINTS TO MAKE: A) WANTED TO
MAKE SURE THAT POSSIBLE SERIOUS EFFECTS OF LABOR
DISPUTE AT STATION ON WHILE QUESTION OF U. S. BASES
WAS KNOWN AT APPROPRIATE LEVELS IN WASHINGTON AND B)
THAT WHAT APPEARS REATIONAL AND LEGAL WITHIN CONTEXT
OF CAPT. CUNNINGHAM'S RESPONSIBILITIES, MIGHT NOT BE
ACCEPTABLE IN LABOR UNION PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE.

LATER MARCH 24 DEFENSE MINISTER AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
BARNARD CALLED TO POINT OUT SITUATION WHICH COULD
DEVELOP AT VICTORIAN STATE ALP ORGANIZATION MEETING
NEXT DAY AT WHICH PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM WAS TO ADDRESS
MEETING ON U. S. AND JOINT FACILITIES IN AUSTRALIA.
BARNARD SAID THAT HE AND PRIME MINISTER INTENDED TO
STAND FIRMLY IN SUPPORT OF U. S. FACILITIES BUT THAT
THEY WOULD BE IN " UNTENABLE" POSITION IF LABOR DISPUTE
EXISTED AT NORTHWEST CAPE AT TIME OF MELBOURNE MEETING.
IN SUBSEQUENT CONSULTATION CAPT. CUNNINGHAM DECIDED TO
WITHDRAW MEMORANDUM AND MAKE WITHDRAWAL KNOWN TO TLC
SECRETARY COLEMAN IN PERTH.

3. EVENING MARCH 25 TLC TEAM ARRIVED AT EXMOUTH.
CONVERSATIONS WITH SHOP STEWARDS AND COMMANDER ARE
NOW GOING ON THERE. PROBABLE POINTS UNDER DISCUSSION
ARE ALLEGATIONS THAT USN PERSONNEL HAVE IN SOME CASES
TAKEN OVER WORK OF EMPLOYEES ON LWOP AND DEMANDS THAT
EMPLOYEES ON LWOP BE PAID FOR TIME SO ABSENT. WILL
REPORT FURTHER.
RICE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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